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The Discovery of America, with some Account of Ancient America, and the Spanish Conquest. By JOHN FISKE. Two Volumes. Boston and New York, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1892. — 516, 631 pp.

These volumes, both from the nature of their contents and from the large number of readers they have reached and will influence, must be considered as among the most remarkable of the Columbian anniversary year. The point of especial significance is that they are thoroughly imbued with the modern scientific spirit and with the doctrine of evolution. The works of Irving and Prescott, which alone compare with Mr. Fiske's in measure of popular success, described primitive America before *The Origin of Species* was published. So far as I am aware, this is the first general narrative history to treat of early American peoples from the vantage ground of the theory of evolution. Thousands of people will receive from these volumes a profound impression of the new light thereby cast upon old problems and of the new and varied interest imparted into the discussion of many questions hitherto esteemed of little importance. Formerly the manners and customs of the aborigines were subjects of curious study, but they could not be effectively correlated in a science of man. For Mr. Fiske's readers they become an intensely interesting revelation of the past life of the race at a stage of culture which has left only faint and obscure memorials in the Old World. In the study of classical and Hebrew antiquity we meet with odd bits of ritual, traces of obsolete customs, fading lines of social organization, survivals of many kinds which almost baffle explanation. Ancient America throws a flood of light on these matters, for there people were found, as we now know, living in a stage of culture in which these puzzling features of social life originated — a stage which the Greeks and Israelites had left behind them when their ascertained history begins. Mr. Fiske's opening chapter offers him the fullest opportunity to display the significance of the social and religious customs of the aborigines, and the results are laid before the reader with startling clearness. In the main they may be accepted, but as regards details some critical reserve is necessary. Mr. Fiske writes of palæolithic man, and especially of the so-called palæoliths, in a tone of greater certainty than he would use to-day, or than it would be safe to use considering the dubious nature of much of the evidence.

Mr. Fiske's treatment of the Northmen question is a most admir-

able piece of historical discussion, amply learned, critical, but not too skeptical, and pervaded with an atmosphere of sound common sense. In regard to the Zeni however, his conclusions will prove less acceptable. The tide of opinion seems to be turning against the authenticity of their voyages.

The third chapter traces the growth of intercourse between Europe and the East and is full of interest. The portion on mediæval trade might with advantage have been somewhat expanded. The mass of appropriate material contained in Heyd's *Geschichte der Levantehandels*, a rich mine of information on that phase of mediæval life, seems to have escaped Mr. Fiske's notice.

The chapter on "The Search for the Indies" opens with a skilful exposition of the theoretical difficulties confronting exploration, owing to false geographical ideas. This is followed by an excellent account of the work of Prince Henry the Navigator. Mr. Fiske decides that the first papal grant to Portugal of possession of her newly discovered lands was by Eugene IV in 1442, instead of by Martin V, as stated by Las Casas and Barros. The bull of Eugene IV is cited in Raynaldus and by Azurara (*Chronica do Descobrimento e Conquista de Guiné*, pp. 90-92). It was a grant of indulgences, not of territory, to those prosecuting the discoveries. Leo X, in his bull of 1514, which confirmed previous bulls, refers to bulls of Martin V and Eugene IV granting permission to trade with the Saracens, but apparently not bestowing any territory. The bull of Nicholas V (1452) is the earliest one cited by Leo as having granted territory.

In contrast with the opinion of Eratosthenes that the Atlantic was very broad, Mr. Fiske cites Seneca as holding the view that it could be crossed in a few days' sail. It seems to me that this inference is unwarranted by the context, which reads as follows :

Sursum ingentia spatia sunt, in quorum possessionem animus admittitur tunc contemnit domicilii prioris angustias. Quantum enim est quod ab ultimis litoribus Hispaniae usque ad Indos jacet? Paucissimorum dierum spatium, si navem suus ventus implevit. At illa regio caelestis per triginta annos velocissimo sideri viam praestat. . . .

The passage is purely rhetorical, comparing the smallness of the earth with the realm of mind, but saying nothing positive as regards the size of the earth. "Paucissimorum dierum," as contrasted with thirty years, might mean indifferently thirty, sixty or ninety days. But does it refer at all to a voyage across the Atlantic? Is not

the true meaning this : The longest journey man can take, from farthest west to farthest east, is a voyage of a very few days compared with the spaces of the heavenly region? The fact that such a voyage would be broken by a land passage of a day or two at Suez does not seem to exclude this otherwise perfectly natural interpretation.

On pages 419-420, in presenting a calculation of the cost of the first voyage of Columbus, Mr. Fiske is misled by Harris. Las Casas says that the eighth part raised by Columbus was 500,000 maravedis. Harris estimates that 1,000,000 maravedis were equal to about \$59,000, "at present values." This gives a total cost of \$236,000—a conclusion which Mr. Fiske's sound critical judgment mistrusts, and he is inclined to reject the figures of Las Casas. The difficulty, however, lies in the excessively high valuation assigned to the maravedi. In 1529 Charles V sold his claim to the Moluccas to Portugal for 350,000 ducats, and stipulated that the ducats should be rated at 375 maravedis each. According to Cibrario's tables (*Economia Politica del Medio Evo*, II, 199) the ducat in 1529 had a specie value of 12.36 francs, or about \$2.34. This would give not quite six and one-third mills (\$0.0063) as the value of a maravedi. On this basis the total cost of the expedition would reach \$25,200, an ample sum considering the purchasing power of money.

In discussing the Bull of Demarcation, Mr. Fiske suggests that the origin of the pope's claim to Apostolic authority for giving away kingdoms is closely connected with the fictitious Donation of Constantine. This is no doubt true as regards territory within the bounds of Constantine's empire; but the right to bestow the possessions of heathen upon Christian princes was more naturally based upon the passage in Psalms ii. 8 : "Ask of me, and I shall give the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession," etc. Boniface VIII based his assertions of the headship of the world, as expressed in the bulls *Ausculat fidei* and *Unam Sanctam*, on Jer. i. 10.

On page 515 Mr. Fiske says : "At no time during the life of Columbus, nor for some years after his death, did anybody use the phrase 'New World' with conscious reference to his discoveries." This statement emphasizes an important phase of the geographical conceptions of the time, but it is not absolutely true. Peter Martyr, in 1494, begins the second letter of his first decade : "Repetis, Illustrissime Princeps, cupere te quae accidunt in Hispania de novo orbe cognoscere."

In a very thorough and careful review of the whole question of the disputed first voyage of Vespucci in 1497, Mr. Fiske makes out a strong case for accepting it as genuine. Harrisse, in his recent work, *The Discovery of North America*, takes a neutral position, but is apparently somewhat disposed to accept the first voyage.

The very lucid account of the naming of America omits one or two points of interest. The first is that Waldseemueller suggested two names: (1) Amerige ("*Amerige quasi Americi terra*"; i.e. Ameri for Americi, and *ge*, Greek for land) that is, Americ's Land; and (2) America, the feminine form of Americus. In the second place, of the two forms, Waldseemueller distinctly preferred the clumsy Greek-Latin compound "Amerige" to the euphonious America. This is indicated by the fact that opposite one of the passages suggesting the names, we find the marginal title Amerige instead of America. (See fac-simile in Winsor's *Narrative and Critical History*, II, 168). Finally, one or two other geographers had the same preference. Schöner, in 1515, in his *Luculentissima quaedam Terrae Totius Descriptio*, etc. c. xi. fol. 60, writes "*America sive Amerigen*," *novus mundus*, etc. (Payne, *New World*, p. 211); and Nicolini de Sabio, in his edition of the *Cosmographiae Introductio* (Venice, 1535) indicates his preference for Amerige over America (Marcou, *Nouvelles Recherches*, p. 44).

Mr. Fiske's treatment of Columbus is sympathetic. Columbus as a man needs sympathetic treatment to secure simple justice. The true historical student has no desire to gloss over his faults; his object is the truth, but the truth set forth in proper proportions. He wants to get at the man as he was. Columbus had a large element of religious enthusiasm in him; he was a crusader after the crusades were dead; he saw visions and regarded himself as an instrument in the hands of God for bringing great changes to pass; his writings, especially towards the end of his life, become mystical and prophetic in tone. For all these things the nineteenth-century mind has little sympathy or patience. To pronounce a just judgment on Columbus therefore requires a mind both tolerant and sympathetic, finely discriminating and capable of fully appreciating in its historical setting the prophetic temperament.

The *Discovery of America* is a fitting introduction to American history. Its thorough and conscientious scholarship and its engaging style make it appeal alike to scholars and to the general reader, while the broad scientific thought pervading it marks it as a characteristic and significant product of the influence of Darwinism upon historical research.

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